

method of estimating a child's nutrition cannot be compared to a careful physical examination, yet the simplicity of the "height to weight" system has made it a practical procedure in every school, and until something equally feasible can be suggested the practice should not be denounced, provided, of course, that it is realized, that the figures thus obtained do not tell the whole story. Few communities have either sufficient funds or the necessary number of qualified physicians to make the careful

physical examination required for more accurate records.

The whole problem of malnutrition is of vital importance to the country. Poor nutrition may be regarded as the end-product of the defects and diseases of childhood, combined usually with faulty or inadequate diet and incorrect habits of personal hygiene. It is therefore desirable that standards of what may be regarded as an adequate physical condition in children be established so that deviations can be recognized and deficiencies remedied.

L. M. LINDSAY

AN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

WHILE the League of Nations is regarded by the public generally as an association of States that have accepted certain international obligations with the object of preserving peace so far as that may be possible, yet it is well that the profession generally should recognize that a committee has been appointed to undertake so far as may be practicable co-operation in all matters which concern international health. The need of such an international health organization made itself felt in 1920 when the typhus and relapsing fever epidemics originating in Russia spread into Poland, and threatened western countries. During the year 1923 a definite plan of co-operation between the health committee of the League and the Office Internationale d'Hygiene Publique was worked out and agreed to by all parties, and the new Health Committee of the League of Nations was constituted on that basis. The work of this international health organisation does not encroach upon that of national health administrations, nor does it embark on theoretical enterprises which lead to no practical action. Its object is to advise the Council and the Assembly of the League in all international questions regarding public health. In several

branches of its work a generous donation from the Rockefeller Foundation has been of the greatest service. To its assistance is due the creation of a special centre for world epidemiological intelligence, and studies have been initiated to effect the standardization of antitoxic serums, the amount of dangerous drugs required for medicinal purposes, the transference of diseases by international waterways. Interchanges of the personnel of public health offices have also been made possible through the Rockefeller Foundation, by means of which health officials of one country visit other countries studying methods of work. As a result of the detailed studies made during the past two years and also of the participation for the first time of the delegation from the United States, it has been found possible to make plans for the early convening of a committee of experts on the limitation of the production and manufacture of dangerous drugs to the world's ascertained medical and scientific requirements. It is desired also to standardise physiologically biological products, such as pituitary and thyroid extracts, insulin, and such powerful drugs as digitalis. An enquiry has also been instituted concerning the incidence of sleeping sick-

ness and tuberculosis, and into the cause of pronounced differences in mortality in certain forms of cancer in various countries of Europe. Reports

are to be published at regular intervals. We are sure that the profession throughout the world will anticipate great assistance from such a magnificent effort.

Editorial Comments

A LISTER MEMORIAL

Acting upon the suggestion of Dr. John Stewart of Halifax, a former student and assistant of Lister, the Association decided two years ago to establish a Triennial Oration in honour of Lister. A committee was appointed to study the question; and as the result of their deliberations it has been decided through the pages of the Journal to ask the members of the Association for contributions towards the establishment of a fund for this object. The sum considered necessary is \$5,000.00. The interest on this would amount to about \$750.00 in three years. An Oration, celebrating the memory of Lord Lister to be delivered triennially before the Canadian Medical Association at their annual meeting will require about that sum for defraying the expenses incurred, whether in the way of bringing across some distinguished visitor from Scotland, or, if a Canadian, his expenses from possibly a distant province, or in the way of the special publication of the oration.

The suggestion has also been made by one of the Lister Committee that a Lister Club or Society be formed and this suggestion has been adopted.

It may be stated that already some \$600.00 has been subscribed. The Journal would urge a careful consideration of this project on the part of its readers. There must be few indeed who, realizing what Lister has meant to medical science in general and to the fame, in the medical world, of our Empire in particular, will not desire to have their names in the list of those who propose to perpetuate in honour his name in this part of the world. It is a real pride of possession. Dr. John Stewart is to deliver the first Listerian Oration at the coming meeting in Ottawa. Cheques may be sent to Dr. F. N. G. Starr, 112 College St., Toronto.

PSYCHIC FLURRIES

The very interesting narrative related in Dr. McDiarmid's paper in this issue deals with but

one of the many psychic flurries that have marked the course of human development throughout the pages of history. Whether one recalls the troublesome times of the middle ages when psychic outbursts assumed the proportions of an epidemic, when people lost their contact with reality and gave unbridled expression to their emotions; or confines one's self to the consideration of such an incident as is recorded above, one sees the same mental process at work.

The power of suggestion in the development of hysteria in the individual is probably less potent than in the development of community hysteria. The former remains, as a rule, localized to the individual while, under the infatuation incited by flaming oratory, aided by the temporary collapse of self-restraint and self-criticism, the latter may assume disastrous proportions whether in the precincts of our legislative halls or indulged in by a community under the guise of religion.

It is worthy of note that these psychic outbursts flourish during periods of social unrest and excitement, such as follow world wars or great plagues. In normal times when all is stability and prosperity; when the forces of reality are sufficiently absorbing to hold in check the dormant forces of emotion, all goes well and the artful spell-binder of the type described sows his seed in unresponsive soil. Then comes some great world upheaval, such as the last war, which loosens the strings of self control and opens the door to emotional and moral unrest and the forces, so long held in check, are given expression in all sorts of fantastic and degrading episodes, not the least of which are the demoralizing scenes, staged under the cloak of religion.

It would appear that the legitimate profession of Brandon has acted wisely in permitting their little flurry to pass quietly into history and take its place beside those greater outbursts which have marred the history of the world's sanity from time immemorial.

F. H. M.